

Australasian College
for Emergency Medicine

Provision of emergency medical telephone support to other health professionals

Policy P181

Document Review

Timeframe for review:	Every three years, or earlier if required.
Document authorisation:	Council of Advocacy, Practice and Partnerships
Document implementation:	Standards and Endorsement Committee
Document maintenance:	Policy and Strategic Partnerships

Revision History

Version	Date	Pages revised / Brief Explanation of Revision
1	July 2006	Reviewed and approved
2	July 2019	Content reviewed and approved, new template adopted

1. Purpose and scope

This document relates to the provision of emergency medical support over the telephone to external health professionals who telephone a hospital Emergency Department (ED).

This policy is applicable to emergency departments in Australia and New Zealand.

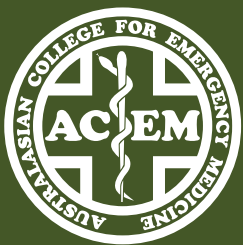
2. Policy

ACEM recognises that external health professionals such as community general practitioners, nurses or rural health practitioners may telephone the emergency department (ED) to seek emergency physician advice regarding their patients.

ACEM also recognises that medical advice provided in such circumstances is dependent on, and limited by, information provided by the health practitioner. Emergency physicians interpret this information without the visual cues that normally help to determine the potential severity of a patient's condition.

Advice given by telephone cannot therefore constitute a full assessment, and ED staff should err on the side of caution in providing an opinion. Where advice is given, the date, time and the advice should be documented, as should the identity and role of the caller, and the patient for whom advice was given. As appropriate, advice should include a recommendation that the patient receives a full assessment in an ED.

Emergency departments should ensure that all ED staff are aware of the policy on telephone advice to health professionals.



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